Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 8, 2020

Mark Zuckerberg
CEO
Facebook
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

Recent geo-political events with Iran have caused a slew of images and misinformation to be spread across the internet and platforms, ranging from humorous to completely fabricated. The pace at which users can generate content is much greater than fact-checkers can act and bad actors looking to set a narrative can seize that opportunity to launch a disinformation campaign promoting a state crafted narrative. The use of online platforms is inexpensive when compared to other, more traditional means of military action and offers deniability to those using it. We have seen this play out in the 2016 election cycle and have hopefully all learned a great deal from it.

But as these threats evolve in complexity so must the response. The difficulty online platforms are having identifying and removing disinformation is further complicated when coupled with U.S. government institutions delaying confirmation of their action. The uncertainty allows disinformation to run wild, free from any legitimate sources and leaving companies and platforms in the unenviable position of making judgement calls with user generated content without a solid factual basis for doing so. But with the world only growing in complexity, this will likely not be the last of these moments.

With that, I have the following questions about Facebook and your subsidiaries response, both with this current situation and with regards to standard protocol, when dealing with retaliatory disinformation campaigns. I would also request written responses to these questions by February 3, 2020.

1. Is there an ability to remove disinformation in real-time? Either by using hashes for images or other methods?
2. Does Facebook have the ability to identify a disinformation campaign before or as it begins to gain traction?
3. Has Facebook and its subsidiaries seen an uptick in disinformation campaigns following recent geo-political events involving Iran?

4. Are Facebook and its subsidiaries planning on publishing any reports or information on disinformation campaigns ahead of the 2020 election?
5. Aside from news, does Facebook have a mechanism to identify content as part of a disinformation campaigns following large geo-political events?
6. Does Facebook or its subsidiaries offer advice or best practices to their partners or large content aggregators in identifying false information?

Facebook and all online platforms know the importance of mitigating both current and future disinformation campaigns and the more understanding the American people and those in government have of how these threats are being addressed, the more we can work together to stop them.

Sincerely,

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress